

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-16

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 CIAE-00

DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-11 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04

RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20 ACDA-19 IO-14 SCI-06 FEA-02

XMB-07 AID-20 IGA-02 DRC-01 AEC-11 AECE-00 /159 W

----- 071692

O R 091125Z SEP 74

FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3766

INFO AMEMBASSY DACCA IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

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DACCA PASS AMBASSADOR MOYNIHAN

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, TECH, IN, US

SUBJECT: PRESS REPORTS ON TARAPUR RESUPPLY

SUMMARY: THE DELHI PRESS SEPTEMBER 9 CARRIES REPORTS OF THE
USG DENIAL OF THE NEW YORK TIMES STORY THAT THE USG HAS STOPPED
THE SHIPMENT OF URANIUM FOR THE TARAPUR ATOMIC POWER REACTOR.
THE STATESMAN AND HINDUSTAN TIMES CORRESPONDENTS EMPHASIZED,
HOWEVER, THAT THE USG IS "REVIEWING" FURTHER SHIPMENTS AND "MAK-
ING DETAILED INQUIRIES" ABOUT THE USES OF URANIUM SUPPLIED TO
TARAPUR. END SUMMARY.

1. THE TIMES OF INDIA, NATIONAL HERALD AND INDIAN EXPRESS
HEADLINES, ALL ON PAGE ONE, SAY THAT THE USG HAS NOT STOPPED
FUEL SUPPLY FOR TARAPUR. THE TIMES OF INDIA AND INDIAN EXPRESS
REPORT THE STATE DEPARTMENT PRESS OFFICER'S CHARACTERIZATION
OF THE NEW YORK TIMES REPORT AS "INACCURATE." THEY QUOTE THE
PRESS OFFICER AS REFERRING TO THE EXCHANGE OF VIEWS ABOUT THE
USES TO WHICH US-SUPPLIED MATERIAL FOR TARAPUR CAN BE PUT AND
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SAYING (A) "WE ARE OPTIMISTIC THAT A MUTUALLY SATISFACTORY FOR-

MULA WILL BE WORKED OUT" AND (B) "THE OCTOBER SHIPMENT WILL GO THROUGH NO MATTER WHAT." THE NATIONAL HERALD OPENS WITH THE UPI REPORT OF AEC CHAIRMAN DIXIE LEE RAY'S DENIAL AND STATEMENT THAT "UNDER THAT (TARAPUR) COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT, THE INDIAN GOVERNMENT HAVE GURANTEED THAT NONE OF THAT MATERIAL THAT GOES TO THE NUCLEAR REACTOR WILL EVER BE USED FOR ANY OTHER PURPOSE OTHER THAN THAT REACTOR WHICH PRODUCES ELECTRICITY."

2. KRISHAN BHATIA'S STORY FROM WASHINGTON IN THE HINDUSTRAN TIMES SAYS THAT USG IS MAKING "DETAILED INQUIRIES" ABOUT THE USES OF THE TARAPUR FUEL. "THE PURPOSE OF THE TALKS BEING HELD AT DIPLOMATIC AS WELL AS EXPOERT LEVEL IS TO INSURE AVOIDANCE OF THE TYPE OF MISUNDERSTANDING THAT AROSE BETWEEN INDIA AND CANADA WHICH AROSE FOLLOWING THE NUCLEAR EXPLOSION OF LAST MAY. IN LAUNCHING THE DISCUSSIONS, THE ADMINISTRATION MAY ALSO HAVE BEEN PROMPTED BY ITS ANXIETY TO EVOLVE A UNIFORM AND COMPREHENSIVE SET OF SAFEGUARDS ABOUT THE USE OF US NUCLEAR MATERIAL NOW THAT IT HAS DECIDED TO PROVIDE THIS TECHNOLOGY TO COUNTRIES IN SUCH AREAS OF TENSION AS WEST ASIA." BHATIA THEN QUOTES THE USG DENIAL, ADDING "IMPLICIT IN THE INQUIRY IS THE POSSIBILITY THAT THE SUPPLIES MAY BE HALTED IF THERE IS SIGNIFICANT DIVERGENCE BETWEEN THE US AND INDIAN INTERPRETATION OF THE TARAPUR AGREEMENT." HE SAYS BOTH STATE DEPARTMENT AND INDIAN EMBASSY OFFICIALS "SEEMED TO REGARD THAT POSSIBILITY AS REMOTE." HE QUOTES A "SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL" AS EXPRESSING OPTIMISM THAT A FORMULA WILL BE WORKED OUT BY BOTH SIDES WELL BEFORE THE NEXT SHIPMENT IS DUE.

3. WARREN UNNA IN THE STATESMAN REPORTS THE AEC IS REVIEWING FURTHER SHIPMENTS TO BE SURE THAT THE SAFEGUARDS ALREADY AGREED TO ARE SUFFICIENT TO PREVENT THE PLUTONIUM END PRODUCTS FROM BEING DIVERTED TO MILITARY USES. "THE COMMISSION, THE STATE DEPARTMENT AND THE INDIAN EMBASSY HERE ARE ALL OPTIMISTIC THAT THE PROPER 'CLARIFICATION' WILL BE REACHED BEFORE THE NEXT QUARTERLY SHIPMENT OF ENRICHED URANIUM IS SCHEDULED TO BE DISPATCHED," ACCORDING TO UNNA. HE EXPLAINS THAT THE SITUATION IS NOT REGARDED AS "HIGHLY VOLATILE" AT THIS TIME BECAUSE THE US IS "CONVINCED" THE PLUTONIUM FOR THE INDIAN BLAST CAME FROM THE CANDIAN - BUILT TROMBAY REACTOR. "WHAT REMAINS TO BE RECONCILED IS INDIA'S INSISTENCE THAT NUCLEAR BLASTS, SUCH AS THE ONE IN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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RAJASTHAN, ARE FOR 'PEACEFUL' PURPOSES AND THE US CONTENTION THAT ANY NUCLEAR EXPLOSION HAS A POTENTIAL MILITARY USE." AFTER PROVIDING SOME DETAILS OF THE TARAPUR AGREEMENT, UNNA REPORTS: "THE STATE DEPARTMENT SENT INDIA A LETTER SEEKING A COMMITMENT BASED ON US STANDARDS OF 'MISUSE' SOON AFTER THE MAY BLAST IN RAJASTHAN. BUT INDIA'S RESPONSE UNTIL NOW HAS BEEN CONSIDERED BOTH UNSATISFACTORY AND AMBIGUOUS."

4. CHARGE SENT MEA JOINT SECRETARY (AMERICAS) TEJAA LETTER
SEPTEMBER 9 SUMMARIZING DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN'S RESPONSE TO PRESS
QUERIES (STATE 196939) AND NOTING THAT DEPARTMENT AND INDIAN
EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON HAS BEEN IN TOUCH ON TAKING PARALLEL
POSITION ON THE ISSUE.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESS COMMENTS, EXPORTS, URANIUM, NUCLEAR POWER PLANTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 09 SEP 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: kelleyw0
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974NEWDE11944
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740250-0005
From: NEW DELHI
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740963/aaaacbrl.tel
Line Count: 121
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: kelleyw0
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 15 JUL 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <15 JUL 2002 by kelleyw0>; APPROVED <10 MAR 2003 by kelleyw0>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PRESS REPORTS ON TARAPUR RESUPPLY SUMMARY: THE DELHI PRESS SEPTEMBER 9 CARRIES REPORTS OF THE
TAGS: PFOR, TECH, IN, US
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005